Union Theological Seminary-
April 4. 1856.

To the Society of Inquiry
at Princeton.

Dear Brethren.

We were very glad to receive your kind letter, & it would have been answered sooner — had not a pressure of other duties prevented. Still more glad were we a short time since to hear that God was pouring out His spirit upon your college & that many were turning to Him. Oh that our own Seminary & all our colleges & Seminaries might be thus baptized. No longer would our church be in that cold, lifeless, dead condition, in which she now is, & the cause of Christ advancing so slowly —

The meetings of our Society this term. have been well attended & unusually interesting. We have been visited by eight different missionaries from every part of the globe & at nearly every meeting have we been favored with the presence of one of the Secretaries of the American Board. Since June six of our number have entered their fields: one each to Syria. Armenia, Jamaica, Rio de Janeiro, the Choctaws & the Marquesas. Of our 408 Alumni — 60 have gone West. 41 to the South. 11 to the Pacific Coast & 43 to the Foreign Field. Only one ninth have gone abroad. This proportion however is steadily increasing

for the past five years it is one sixth. There are now in the Seminary 16 who hope to go. Five of these are in the present Senior class. This Brethren looks small & it is, Would that we could report one half or three fourths dedicated to the foreign work. While only one goes abroad when ten stay at home, we cannot but think that more ought to go. While we have at home one minister to every 800 & have sent abroad only one missionary to every 2,000,000 — is it right Brethren, is it right that so many of us should stay?

In your letter of Nov. 18 you say — there is a vast amount of apathy & indifference on the subject of missions in our churches & that until this apathy is removed we cannot expect ~~the church~~ her "to give up her prayers, her alms & her sons, freely" to the service of Christ, and you then inquire — how this apathy can be removed? It is indeed, as you say a momentous question, & one which we fear will not soon be solved. But may we not ask, Can it be done in any way except by the ministry giving themselves to this work abroad; engaging personally in this great work of giving the gospel to the benighted heathen? The churches will not be interested in it, unless her ministers are, & how can her ministers manifest their interest so well as by engaging personally in it? Nay more — let us go out & preach & endeavor to awaken the church to the claims of a perishing world, & will not their first question be "Why do you not go yourself? If this work is so important as you say — if souls by thousands are dying every day — why do you not fly

on the wings of the wind to break to them the bread of life? Why do you come & preach to us - about their great need - & not lift a finger yourself to satisfy that need?" - How much more powerful than a thousand sermons - would be our really strong going - showing by our example - that we believed the gospel of such infinite value - to benighted souls - that we were willing to face - danger - martyrdom & death - that all might possess it? Would we not - then be indeed living daily sermons! No charge is so often brought against the characters of our ministers as that they do not live in accordance with their profession - And how can we so well disprove this charge - evince our belief in the truth of christianity & its necessity to the wants of Heathen - as by giving our lives to spread it abroad. Said a business man of this city to me, not long since - one too, who is not a christian - "No one preaches to us - like your Missionaries. When we see a young man & his wife come down to our docks & enter a vessel, severing every tie that binds them to their home & country for the sake of their religion - it preaches to us more powerfully - than a thousand sermons from the pulpit - It is a kind that comes home to our hearts". And his, we believe - is the testimony of thousands - Would not our going too - tend to deepen the piety of our churches - unite our vying denominations - root out this sectarian & party spirit & lead sinners to the feet of Christ? Cannot we benefit our own land - more by going as Missionaries than we can by staying at home!

Have not Judson - & Scudder - & our other noble Missionaries done more to deepen the piety of our churches - (to say

nothing of the sort- good- they have accomplished abroad) than they would- if they had remained amongst us? were now such men as Dr- Alexander Dr. Cheever- Dr. Storrs deeply impressed with the wants of a perishing world- to go forth themselves- to become missionaries to the heathen- would not every man in their churches ~~[redacted]~~ become a zealous working minister- would not every church in the union feel the impulse! would not the impenitent feel- If the gospel is of such vast importance to the heathen abroad then I must accept- if it also! Then Brethren it appears to us- never has the christian church been so prosperous- in her whole past history- as when she has been emphatically a missionary church. & just so soon- as she has ceased extending her efforts abroad that soon have corruption & decay begun their sad work at home. Those churches too which have been the most missionary- have had the darkest pict in their members at home- Permit us to ask again- Can we in any way so benefit our churches at home- as by giving ourselves to the evangelization of the heathen? Now, dear Brethren is an important question- May God give us grace- calmly- fully- prayerfully to consider it- & then to act accordingly- will you not pray- that upon us may rest the Spirit of our Master- & then we will have the spirit of missions- We should be very happy indeed to hear from you- at your earliest leisure- & to know- whether you think the solution we have presented is correct.

In the bonds of gospel love- Your brethren-

T. L. Byington- Secy.

George D. White. Pres-
Sec. Treas- in union-